

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

March 25, 2010 @ 6:30 P.M.
RI Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI

APPROVED MINUTES
ATTENDANCE

TAC members present:

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member – Jamestown
Dr. Robert Quigley, Vice Chair	Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
Mr. Alan Brodd	Cumberland Water Department
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Mr. Michael Cassidy	City of Pawtucket
Mr. Russ Chateaufneuf	RI Dept. of Environmental Management
Ms. Marilyn Cohen	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Ms. Ann Clarke representing Mr. Kevin Dillon	RI Airport Corporation
Ms. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. Paul Reynolds	Public Member – South Kingstown
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member – Bristol
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member – Providence
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Mark Therrien	RIPTA
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Lee Whitaker	Town of East Greenwich
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville

TAC members absent:

Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Dan Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Robert Murray	Public Member – Smithfield
Ms. Linda Painter	City of Providence
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Mr. Jim Soctomah	Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health

Others in attendance:

Mr. Robert Batting	
Mr. Dan Berman	FHWA
Ms. Barbara Breslin	FHWA

Mr. William Gordon
Ms. Pam Sherrill
Mr. Kevin Viveiros

FTA
P. Sherrill Planning LLC
PARE Corporation

Statewide Planning Staff Present:

Mr. Kevin Flynn
Mr. Jared Rhodes
Ms. Karen Scott
Ms. Ronnie Sirota

Associate Director
Chief
Acting Supervising Planner
Senior Planner

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Shocket welcome new members Judith Drew representing the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and Ann Clarke who was representing Kevin Dillon of the RI Airport Corporation.

2. Approval of February 4, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Upon motion of Mr. Walker to approve and seconded by Ms. Sherman, the February 4, 2010 minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Mr. Robert Battling indicated he would speak later in the agenda.

4. Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for Providence-Pawtucket Transportation Management Area

• ***Presentation by FHWA/FTA – for information:***

Ms. Barbara Breslin, FHWA and Mr. William Gordon, FTA who were part of the review team spoke about the review and evaluation of the Metropolitan Planning Process (MPO) which was conducted on September 30 (see distributed report for details). Ms. Breslin gave an overview of the report and Mr. Gordon spoke about RIPTA and land use. The State Planning Council along with RIDOT and RIPTA are recertified. Some points included are:

- A corrective action needs to be addressed within four years to include fiscal constraint as shown in the TIP. The MPO should include the required categories for funding in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Statewide Planning staff should work with RIDOT, FHWA, and FTA officials to create a new format for the TIP that best meets RI's needs while conforming to the Federal regulations for funding categories.
- There are also recommendations and commendations listed (for complete details see the "FY2010 Certification of the State Planning Council". Ms. Breslin stated that staff is doing a great job even though there is less staff. However, further staff cuts could begin to effect MPO performance in a negative way. There also was a commendation to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) praising the effectiveness of the TAC and its climate of cooperation.

- Mr. Gordon stated it is a pleasure to see people as active as the TAC. He also praised RIPTA's metro area planning initiative. Land use sets the stage for all of government's initiatives. Rhode Island's MPO was nominated as a National Model through the Volpe Center.

At the end of the presentation, Ms. Shocket asked if there were any questions. Mr. Schiller would like the opinion of Ms. Breslin and Mr. Gordon regarding his concern that on major public hearings, the TAC receives a great deal of public comments. Even though a summary is provided, there has not been time to read through all the comments and judge the particular item before voting. He previously commented that his suggestion was to have one month to do this. Mr. Gordon responded that sometimes it depends on the circumstances and the required timing of the amendment but it is certainly a good goal. Mr. Schiller said the since the TAC immediately votes, individual TAC members have to go to the State Planning Council to comment. Ms. Scott pointed out that in the case of the current Long Range Plan amendment, it is include don this TAC agenda for information only to give the TAC ample opportunity to review the amendment prior to the public hearing. When timing allows, the extra month requested by Mr. Schiller will be incorporated into the review process.

5. **Metropolitan Providence Transit Enhancement Study**

- ***Presentation by RIPTA – for information:***

Mr. Therrien gave the presentation. RIPTA finished the study in December. Ms. Amy Pettine is the Project Manager on this \$400,000 study on a new vision for transit in metro Rhode Island. Recommended improvements are included in the Executive Summary of the report, distributed to the TAC. Under "Meeting Current Transit Needs", recommendations include:

- Provide additional bus service to meet current demographic needs.
- Improve the transit experience includes items such as bus shelters and GPS technology to track real time bus arrivals.
- Reinvent Kennedy Plaza.
- Introduce new transit hubs to eliminate the need to transfer.
- Increase the Park and Ride Capacity. Many existing lots are overcrowded today.
- Initiate rapid bus service.
- Build a Providence Streetcar system.
- Strengthen intermodal connections.
- Expand programs for commuters.
- Encourage Transit-Oriented Development.

Comments from the TAC followed the presentation. Mr. Schiller was very pleased with the project especially with the ECO-PASS. He suggested that RIPTA hold a public meeting and present it to the bus passengers. He does have several concerns. Public involvement is needed. He disagrees with the dispersement of buses from Kennedy Plaza. People are afraid to cross Burnside Park. Buses will be dispersed away from the police, rest rooms, etc. Another concern is about the proposed streetcar system because of the cost of \$76 million. RIPTA already had deficit issues. Items have not been prioritized as yet. There is the Pawtucket Train Station, routes in South County and

Aquidneck Island. Mr. Schiller believes there will be duplicate service between the buses and the trolleys. Mr. Schiller feels the RI Hospital route should be a priority.

Mr. Reynolds commented that the theory behind the streetcar system is that developers will invest in permanent infrastructure like streetcar lines but necessary as much in less permanent services like bus routes. Mr. Wood commented that the process is about putting diverse groups together and coming up with a good plan. Mr. Therrien stated the RIPTA Strategic Planning Committee is taking an integrated system perspective for all transit including rail. The metro study is a piece of the overall system. The Aquidneck Island study is another piece.

6. Transportation 2030 – Amendment #1

• ***Staff presentation – for information:***

Ms. Scott gave the presentation. She stated that RIDOT has requested an amendment to the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation 2030. In order for the State to move forward with securing the Federal Transit Administration funding to complete the Pawtucket Train Station Feasibility Study, FTA is requiring the State to reflect the funding that would be needed to construct the Pawtucket Train Station in the fiscally constrained Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation 2030. In the package mailed to TAC members, there is the proposed funding plan for construction of the Pawtucket Train Station as well as the proposed text changes that will be integrated into Transportation 2030. Ms. Scott wanted to give TAC members the information with ample time for review prior to the public hearing that is scheduled for April 22, 2010 at the Pawtucket Visitors Center.

7. Staff Report

Ms. Scott gave the staff report:

- Ms. Scott reported that last month Paul Reynolds asked a question about earmarks in the TIP and whether they lose value every year. In some cases, it may look like it is losing value but it is actually staff charging time to planning and design of the project. Also, a project may be authorized for say \$1 million but at the time of the annual budget, it may only be appropriated \$900,000. In fact, RIDOT reports that most earmarks only actually get 90% of what was originally authorized. Mr. Brodd then asked if the request should be for 110%.
- Safe Routes to School applications were due last month. Statewide Planning has received 24 applications from 15 different municipalities totaling about \$4.6 million. The SRTS Steering Committee will meet on April 5, where they will finalize the budget, appoint a selection committee, and review and finalize the schedule for awarding the grants. Ms. Scott distributed a list of SRTS Steering Committee members, which has a similar composition to the Committee from 2006. Although a manageable size group is important, if there is an organization or interest group that should be added, suggestions are welcome. Ms. Sirota, the SRTS Coordinator, is already working with RIDOT to review and score the applications. Staff is tentatively planning to announce the recipients in early June.
- Ms. Scott wanted to give the TAC an update on the Roadway Investment – Local Equity Aid Program. As she understands it, the TAC was instrumental in ensuring

that this state and federal funding was distributed to the municipalities for local road and sidewalk improvements. This week, the Public Works Association hosted a roundtable discussion with RIDOT staff to discuss the successes and challenges with moving projects forward using this funding. The overall feel was that all municipalities felt very grateful for the funding. That said, there was some frustration with the conditions attached to spending the money, particularly the federal portion. Mr. Alan Brodd was present at that meeting and Ms. Scott called on him to say a few words. Mr. Brodd was attending the meeting as president of the RI Public Works organization. The workshop focused on barriers to getting local agreements signed and actually beginning the projects. Mr. Brodd felt the money would be spent in this construction season.

- Ms. Scott also reported on a relatively new group that is forming in Northern Rhode Island and Central Massachusetts, the Blackstone Valley Partnership. Basically, it's an alliance of municipalities, business interests, elected officials, and environmental and community service groups collaborating to coordinate economic, transportation and land use initiatives among the 24 municipalities in a 2 state region. One of the first issues that the group is looking at is transportation. Most recently, they have convened a group of mayors to discuss transportation issues facing each municipality to look for ways to work together. In fact Mr. Therrien was at today's meeting presenting RIPTA service issues and opportunities. He mentioned perhaps using this group as platform to begin planning for future transit service in the area, similar to the Metro Area Study and the efforts underway on Aquidneck Island and South County. Mr. Wood was also at the meeting and commented that the group seems to be uniting the right partners to begin discussing issues relevant to the entire Blackstone Valley Region.
- TAC members should have received updated TIP Tables for your TIP document. Ms. Scott pointed out that although several amendments were completed lately, the table that was distributed is the most update version.
- There is a public hearing scheduled at the next TAC meeting on April 22, 2010. The meeting will be held at the Pawtucket Visitors Center. That should be the first of our moving meetings. Staff is finalizing the schedule now but the TAC is scheduled for Burrillville, Warwick, Aquidneck Island, and either Bristol or Smithfield over the next several months. If you have any additional suggestions for out of town locations, just let Ms. Sirota know.

8 Additional Public Comment

Mr. Bob Batting, a retired businessman, was on the RIPTA Board for five years. He elaborated on several issues that he perceived while he was on the Board including transfers from Medicaid through the Department of Human Services and operating funds derived from the preventative maintenance budget line item. He went on to describe several issues that he saw with the current funding structure of RIPTA and offered, as a potential solution, that all transit be combined under RIDOT including RIPTA, the RI Airport Corporation and the RI Bridge Authority.

9. Other Business

Ms. Shocket reported that Mr. Whitaker was retiring from his position as East Greenwich Planning Director and his position with the TAC. He was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his nine (9) years of dedicated service.

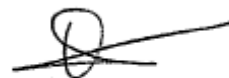
Ms. Shocket also thanked the participants of this TAC meeting. She felt very inspired by the inter-jurisdictional nature of the presentation and was glad the TAC was a part of so many comprehensive transportation planning initiatives.

Mr. Schiller expressed interest in inviting the Executive Director of the National Corridors Initiative, Jim Repass to give a presentation to the TAC at a future meeting. The TAC agreed that this would be beneficial to the group. Ms. Scott will contact Mr. Repass and set up the presentation.

10. Adjourn

The TAC adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Karen G. Scott', written over a horizontal line.

Karen G. Scott
Secretary